

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9900

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECIN, EGEN, SG

SUBJECT: ECOWAS SUMMER INTERN PROJECT

REF: STATE 134253

1. SENEGALESE VIEW OF REGIONAL COOPERATION IN AFRICA IS THAT IT MUST PROCEED IN SMALL PRACTICAL STEPS BASED ON COMMON INTERESTS AND CONCESSIONS MADE BY SOME OF THE STRONGER STATES IN FAVOR OF THEIR RELATIVELY DISADVANTAGED PARTNERS. SINCE INDEPENDENCE SENEGALESE HAVE WORKED TO BUILD INSTITUTIONS WITH THEIR IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS AND WITH OTHER FRENCH EXPRESSION AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO ADVANCE INTER-AFRICAN COOPERATION AND SOLIDARITY. THE RESULTS OF THIS POLICY CAN BE SEEN IN THE SENEGAL RIVER VALLEY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (OMVS), GAMBIA RIVER VALLEY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (OMVG), WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (CEAO) AND AFRICAN-MAURITIAN COMMON ORGANIZATION (OCAM), IN ALL OF WHICH SENEGAL HAS BEEN A MAJOR MOTIVATIONAL FORCE.

2. AFTER SOME INITIAL HESITATION OWING TO FEARS OF NIGERIAN DOMINANCE, SENEGAL RATIFIED ECOWAS TREATY IN JANUARY 1977, HAVING BEEN ASSURED THAT COMMUNITY WOULD BE OPEN TO CENTRAL AFRICAN STATES SUCH AS ZAIRE AND CAMEROUN AND THAT VOTE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EACH MEMBER WOULD BE EQUAL IN DETERMINATION OF COMMUNITY POLICY. ONE PROBLEM AREA IS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECOWAS AND SIX NATION CEAO WHICH HAS DEVELOPED INSTITUTIONS SIMILAR TO THOSE WHICH ECOWAS SEEKS TO CREATE FOR LARGER GROUPING. SENEGALESE INSIST THAT CEAO AND ECOWAS ARE "COMPLEMENTARY AND NOT CONTRADICTORY", BUT IF EACH GROUPING EVENTUALLY HAS OWN INSTITUTIONS IN AREAS SUCH AS FISHING, AGRICULTURE OR TRADE,

OBVIOUSLY THERE WOULD BE DUPLICATION OF EFFORT. SENEGALESE APPEAR SATISFIED WITH PACE OF DEVELOPMENT OF ECOWAS, BEING AWARE OF PROBLEMS OF COORDINATION AMONG 15 STATES AND OF THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE WITH CEAO. SENEGALESE ARE ALSO WARY OF CREATING YET ANOTHER SET OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS WHO PRODUCE LITTLE EXCEPT REPORTS AND HOLD MEETINGS WITHOUT ADVANCING THEIR PROFESSED GOALS.

3. SENEGAL WOULD EXPERIENCE FEW PROBLEMS IN OPENING ITS MARKET TO OTHER ECOWAS STATES. PRODUCTS FROM FIVE OTHER CEAO PARTNERS HAVE ENTERED AT ZERO OR REDUCED RATES OF DUTY FOR SEVERAL YEARS WITHOUT HAVING MUCH EFFECT ON TRADE PATTERNS. SENEGAL HAS SMALL INDUSTRIAL BASE AND PROBABLY WOULD BE ABLE TO HOLD ITS OWN AGAINST OTHER WEST AFRICAN STATES, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF "SAFEGUARD" ARRANGEMENTS IN ECOWAS TREATY TO COMPENSATE WEAKER MEMBERS OF REVENUE LOSSES.

4. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT SOME COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS WILL BE FUNCTIONING WITHIN TEN YEARS, ALTHOUGH NOT ALL SIGNATORIES WILL BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL INSTITUTIONS WITHOUT FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEMS. USG DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE ANY ROLE TO PLAY AT MOMENT, BUT AT SOME POINT, ECOWAS PROBABLY WILL SEEK EXTERNAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT. OVERALL IMPACT OF ECOWAS ON US RELATIONS WITH AREA SHOULD BE POSITIVE TO EXTENT THAT MEMBER STATES ARE ABLE TO BECOME LESS DEPENDENT ON OUTSIDE POWERS AND OVERCOME LIMITS OF SMALL NATIONAL MARKETS.

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